

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7340

S E C R E T GENEVA 9445

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, IS, PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: ICRC REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN ISRAELI BODY EXCHANGE

1. ICRC DELEGATE GENERAL FOR MIDDLE EAST, MICHEL CONVERS, CALLED ON HAS COUNSELOR TODAY TO REQUEST USG ASSISTANCE IN CLARIFYING "MISUNDERSTANDING" CURRENTLY STYMYING ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN CONCILIATION MOVES.

2. CONVERS, WHO RETURNED FROM CAIRO OVER WEEKEND, STATED THAT AT END OF LAST EXCHANGE OF BODIES FROM 1973 HOSTILITIES, ISRAELIS UNDERSTOOD THERE WERE 17 ISRAELI BODIES REMAINING UNLOCATED IN SUEZ-SINAI BATTLE AREAS. DURING LAST KISSINGER VISIT TO CAIRO, ISRAELIS INFORMED THAT SADAT TOLD SECRETARY THAT NINE OF THESE BODIES WERE IN THE HANDS OF EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT. CONVERS SAID THAT THIS IS MISUNDERSTANDING AND THAT HE HAD BEEN PERSONALLY ASSURED BY MHAMMED RIYADH AND GENERAL MADGOUB QUOTE QUOTE FIRMLY UNQUOTE ON SATURDAY, DEC 20 THAT EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IN FACT HELD NO RPT NO ISRAELI BODIES.

3. ON OTHER HAND, CONVERS REPORTED, ISRAELIS STRONGLY BELIEVE REPORT OF SADAT-KISSINGER CONVERSATION, AND THAT EGYPTIANS IN FACT ARE HOLDING BODIES

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IN QUESTION. CONVERS STATES HE HAS SPOKEN PERSONALLY

ON THIS SUBJECT TO RABIN, PERES AND ALLON, WHO
STRONGLY OF THIS OPINION.

4. CONVERS UNDERScoreD THAT IN HIS JUDGEMENT "MIS-
UNDERSTANDING" HOLDING UP PROGRESS ON OTHER HUMAN-
ITARIAN AND PEACE PROJECTS. PRESSED FOR SPECIFICS,
CONVERS POINTED TO ISRAELI HALT OF RELEASE OF
EGYPTIAN DETAINEES, ONE OF SIX POINTS THEY HAD AGREED
TO EARLIER THIS YEAR IN EXCHANGE FOR RETURN OF 55
ISRAELI BODIES.

5. CONVERS URGED ALL POSSIBLE USG ASSISTANCE
TO HELP CLARIFY "MISUNDERSTANDING". ASKED IF HE
FELT THERE ANY POSSIBILITY OF ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE
OF US ASSURANCES ON THIS SCORE, CONVERS REPLIED
AFFIRMATIVELY, CITING RECENT CONVERSATION WITH
ISRAELI GENERAL SAFIR WHO, HE BELIEVED, WAS
PREPARED ACCEPT VIEW THAT EGYPTIANS IN FACT DO NOT
HOLD BODIES. PLEASE PROTECT FOREGOING.

6. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADVICE DEPARTMENT MAY
PROVIDE THIS SUBJECT FOR CONVERS WHO PLANS TO REMAIN
IN SWITZERLAND UNTIL JAN 7, WHEN HE PROCEEDS MIDDLE
EAST AGAIN. DALE

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